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University anticipates record enrollment, most highly qualified freshman class in its history

AUGUST 9, 2006

Georgia Southern University will begin the 2006-2007 academic year with the largest enrollment and the most highly qualified freshman class in school history.

President Bruce Grube made the announcement during his eighth annual State of the University Address, which was part of the Fall Convocation Ceremony held on Wednesday, Aug. 9, in the Performing Arts Center.

According to preliminary figures, 16,850 students are enrolled for the start of the fall semester. That number would break the record of 16,646 students established in Fall 2005. In fact, it would mark the fifth year in a row that Georgia Southern has set a new record for enrollment.

Preliminary numbers also reveal that the average SAT score for the members of this fall's freshman class will exceed 1,100 for the first time in school history. Last fall's freshman class had an average SAT score of 1,098, which was the highest such figure ever at Georgia Southern.

This fall would mark the 12th consecutive year that the average SAT score of the incoming freshmen increased over the previous fall semester. Georgia Southern is the only one of the 18 four-year institutions in the University System of Georgia to report such an increase in every fall since 1995.

The average SAT score of the incoming freshmen at Georgia Southern has increased by more than 110 points since Grube became the University's 11th president in 1999.

Final enrollment figures and average SAT scores for Fall 2006 will be announced in October.

'Setting the Stage for a New Georgia Southern University' has been the theme for Fall Convocation Week, which began on Monday, Aug. 7, with a series of departmental meetings, workshops and orientation sessions.

In addition to Grube's address, the Aug. 9 convocation ceremony featured a presentation by W. Bede Mitchell, the dean of the Zach B. Henderson Library. Mitchell provided an in-depth update of the ongoing expansion and renovation of the library.

The first phase of the Henderson Library project, which began in July 2004, is nearing completion. The new addition to the east side of the existing library will feature a three-story glass atrium with a virtual waterfall, an automated book retrieval system, wireless access and laptop computers for use within the building, two classrooms that each contain 30 computers, and a multipurpose room with seating for 50 people.

The new addition is expected to open in the middle of September 2006. The second phase of the project the renovation of the existing library and the construction of a four-story addition to the west side of the building will begin later this fall.

The convocation ceremony also featured remarks from Linda Bleicken, the University's provost and vice president for Academic Affairs; Patricia Humphrey, the Faculty Senate moderator; Connie Clark, a representative of the Personnel Advisory Committee; and Chris Ford, the president of the Student Government Association.

The Henderson Library project is one of several major current and future construction projects that will help the University meet the needs of its growing student body.

The expansion of the Recreation Activity Center is continuing. This project, which began in May 2005, will increase the facility's size from almost 82,000 square feet to more than 200,000 square feet. The additions will include three swimming pools, additional indoor courts and extra locker rooms. The outdoor recreation fields are also being expanded and upgraded as part of the project, which is scheduled for completion in December 2006.

The Gene Bishop Fieldhouse is nearing completion at Paulson Stadium. At 13,600 square feet, the new facility will be approximately twice the size of the old Lupton Building that it is replacing. Featuring locker rooms as well as space for meetings and pre-game social events, the Bishop Fieldhouse is expected to be ready in time for the football team's season opener against Central Connecticut State on Saturday, Sept. 9.

Meanwhile, construction has just begun on the third phase of the Fine Arts project. This brand-new, 29,850-square foot building will feature galleries for student and professional artists, a black box theatre for student productions, and administrative offices. The facility is scheduled for completion in Summer 2007.

Future projects will include the conversion of Veazey Hall and Cone Hall into classroom and administrative spaces, and the renovation of the Foy Building.

Convocation week at Georgia Southern will conclude on Friday, Aug. 11. That same day, some 3,850 students are scheduled to arrive on campus and move into the University's 11 residence halls. A series of Welcome Week activities for the students will begin on the afternoon of Aug. 11 with the annual cookout on Sweetheart Circle.

Classes will begin on Monday, Aug. 14.